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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0621
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SUBJECT: POST REQUESTS AFRICOM ASSESSMENT ON REMOVAL OF WRECKS FROM
MONROVIA PORT

¶1. Embassy Monrovia reaffirms its request for DoD assistance in conducting an assessment on the feasibility of removing the primary vessels blocking access to the commercial wharf in the Port of Monrovia. Two wrecks, the Torm Alexandra and an adjacent pilot tender ship, are presently blocking one and a half berths out of a total of four, reducing the capacity of the port by 50 percent. The overuse of the two remaining berths has put additional strain on an already fragile part of the wharf, endangering all port activity. Previous GOL efforts to find a commercial solution have failed and any future commercial endeavor would take several more months and there would be no guarantee of success.

¶2. The March Africa Partnership Station (APS) visit to Monrovia demonstrated the importance of the port to our interests in West Africa. Anything we can do to reduce the current risk and to contribute to the eventual larger solution (which will be through a private-public partnership) serves our long term security interests. We will soon begin training and equipping a Liberian Coast Guard to protect Liberia's coast from threats of terrorism, narcotics and human trafficking, illegal fishing, piracy and environmental degradation. The Liberia Coast Guard will work in cooperation with the U.S. Navy as well as with other West and Central African countries to counter these threats, and ready access to the port is essential

¶3. On the economic front, the wrecks constitute a navigational hazard that raises insurance rates and increases the risk of a mishap. Removal of the two wrecks alone would result in the immediate increase in port productivity and lower costs without any other improvements to the port.

¶4. The removal of the wrecks is critical to our interests in Liberia's security and economic recovery, and to our interests in promoting regional stability and containing transnational threats. Without a functioning port, prices will rise, unemployment will remain high, and people will remain dissatisfied and be more likely to take up arms again.

THOMAS-GREENFIELD